

Give to Yourself: Positive Self-Talk

 grades: 3-5

 30 minutes

“Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening.”
– Lisa M. Hayes

Lesson Summary

The lesson focuses on the power of positive self-talk in practicing self-care. Students engage in a Four Corners activity to consider their self-care habits and practices, then complete a worksheet to inspire self-compassion by reflecting on all things that make them human. Guide them to understand that using words to support themselves will prepare them to use words to support others authentically.

Students will Examine

- What is self-talk?
- How self-talk impacts their emotional self.
- How positive self-talk can start a ripple within themselves.

Pre-Activity Prep

- Prepare and hang the Four Corners signs—STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE (REFLECT section).
- Print or digitally share the Worksheet: I am Human ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (1/student) (REFLECT section).
- (Optional) Print or digitally share an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)) (1/student) (CONNECT + CLOSE section).

MATERIALS

ThinkGive Journals
Student Journal Guide ([PDF](#))
ThinkGive Energizers and Icebreakers ([PDF](#))
Quote Image ([PDF](#))
Paper (Four Corners signs)
Worksheet: I am Human ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))
Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#))

MEDIA TO PREP

Slides: [Give to Yourself: Positive Self-Talk](#)
Read-aloud book: [I am Human](#) (2:35)

SHARE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Several students volunteer to share about the first action they took.

Ask: What is one action you took to care for your body in a new way? How did you feel? Would you retake this action? Explain.

ICEBREAKER

Word Association

Divide students into groups (5-7 students/group). Each group forms a circle. A student acts as the leader in each group and chooses a topic (see examples below). Everyone else takes turns saying a word that is associated with the topic. If someone takes longer than ten seconds or says a word unrelated to the topic, they become the new leader and choose a new topic.

Age-appropriate and culturally inclusive topics include mammals, sports, living beings in the ocean, colors, places in a neighborhood, things in space, items in a house, etc.

Refer to the ThinkGive Energizers and Icebreakers ([PDF](#)) for other icebreaker ideas.

★ TEACHER TIP

Start each lesson with an icebreaker to help your students connect, especially if new participants are joining during the program.

OPEN

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Quote/Image

Display the Quote Image ([PDF](#)) and/or read the quote or ask for a student volunteer to read it (see slides): “Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening.” – Lisa M. Hayes

Discuss: What does this image/quote mean to you?

Explain: In the last lesson, we practiced being kind to our bodies by developing a self-care plan. Remember, it is important to care for ourselves before we can give to others and create ripples of kindness throughout our groups and communities. Today, we will practice another form of self-care by noticing how we speak to—and support—ourselves.

Discuss:

- What does the term self-talk mean to you?
- Why is it important to be aware of our self-talk?
- How can using positive self-talk affect our emotional selves (feelings)?
- How can caring for ourselves prepare us to give to others?



VOCAB

Self-talk: noun; talk or thoughts directed at yourself.

THINK • GIVE

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Activity: Four Corners

Place signs in four corners of the room—STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE. Read aloud statements from the list below that best resonate with students (and/or create your own). Between each, students decide how they feel and move to the appropriate corner. Allow time for brief discussion between statements—ask students why they chose to stand where they did.

Statements:

- I can think of at least one thing I like about myself.
- It's easier to give to someone else than it is to give to myself.
- I do more than one thing daily to care for myself.
- Caring for myself makes me feel happy.
- Giving to myself creates a ripple.
- I know more than one way to calm myself when worried or upset.
- Being kind to myself will help me now and in the future.
- I can think of more than one strength I have.
- I can think of a time I felt proud of myself.
- I am comfortable with who I am.
- It's important to take care of my emotional self.
- I am my biggest cheerleader!
- Saying positive things to myself is challenging.

Students can reflect in pairs/small groups/the whole group as time allows.

Discuss:

- What, if anything, did you learn about yourself during this activity?
- What, if anything, did this activity reveal to you about your self-talk?
- Did you notice any patterns about yourself? Explain.

Tech Option

Read-aloud book: [I am Human](#) (2:35) by Susan Verde. If you can access tech, show this read-aloud before students complete the Positive Self-Talk worksheet. This story is about positive self-talk, compassion, and being human. An example of positive self-talk is: "I am not alone. I am connected to my friends... to my family... to the world. We are all humans together."

Discuss:

- How does remembering how we are all human help us care for ourselves?
- Which positive self-talk statement(s) stood out to you? Explain.

★ CONNECTION

Read-aloud book: [Sticky Brain](#) (6:07) by Nicole Libin, Ph.D. Aria feels like she's having a terrible day ... until she learns how to change her thoughts. Do you find that your bad thoughts stick to you like glue? Do you ever feel stuck? How can we help our brain make the good things stick?

Positive Self-Talk

Students practice positive self-talk by completing the Worksheet: I am Human ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)). Each box provides a positive self-talk sentence and a question to inspire students to reflect on how we are all human—and ultimately to develop self-compassion.

Discuss:

- Do you find it easy or challenging to practice positive self-talk? Explain.
- What are the ripple effects of positive self-talk? Does it include impacting others? Explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

- It can be hard to practice positive self-talk when people around us are hard on themselves. What can we do to ensure we are less affected by other's negative self-talk?
- When we engage in negative self-talk, how can we show ourselves kindness in the moment?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Take Action

Explain: Before the next ThinkGive session [provide date], practice speaking positive self-talk(s) to yourselves. If you find it helpful, write down a positive self-talk statement on a Post-it to take with you.

Brainstorm

Review some of the positive self-talk comments from the lesson.

Things to Consider

- The ThinkGive Three focus is on being True. Make your action(s) authentic to you!
- Consider when practicing positive self-talk is most helpful, then try it out!
- Do you notice a ripple effect when you practice positive self-talk?

Closing Quote

Use this quote to close out the lesson. The reflective questions could serve as an Exit Ticket ([PDF](#) | [Google](#)).

“Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening.”
– Lisa M. Hayes

- How does this quote connect to the lesson?

★ THINKGIVE THREE

1. True: be authentic
2. Small: small is all
3. Brave: step into your courage zone




★ CONNECTION

Lisa M. Hayes is a writer and life coach who helps people improve relationships and improve their lives through self-care and kindness.

Sample Actions

- I wasn't doing as well as my peers during art class. Instead of comparing myself to others, I reminded myself that I've improved a lot this year.
- I got into a fight with my aunt and felt awful. I told myself it was okay; everyone loses their patience. Then I apologized and agreed we would respect each other more the next time we disagree!
- I was nervous to try a new sport, but I told myself to do my best and not worry. It was challenging, but I had fun. I'm proud of myself for trying something new!

Student Journal Questions

-  Do you treat yourself better or worse than you treat your family and friends? Explain.
-  Share a story about a time when you used positive self-talk. If you haven't had this experience, share a time when using positive self-talk might have been helpful.
-  Write about a quality you have or want to develop that makes you feel good about yourself.

Extensions

DO

Positive Self-Talk Circle

Students stand in a circle. Each student shares a positive self-talk statement they might speak to themselves; the group repeats each statement. Continue until everyone has offered an idea. Students should feel free to 'pass' or ask for more time. At the end, ask students to be silent, take a few slow, deep breaths, and notice how they feel in their bodies.

WATCH

Video: [Your brain is wired for negative thoughts. Here's how to change it.](#) (4:02). This video explains why insults stick in our minds better than compliments—and how we can change that.

Discuss:

- Why are our brains wired for negative thoughts?
- What ways can we train our brains to let go of negative thoughts and focus on positive thoughts?

READ / LISTEN

Poem: "Self-esteem" ([PDF](#)) by Ellie Irving (page 12, page 18 of the pdf).

Discuss:

- Do you ever feel like you're not good at something and/or that other people are better than you?
- Do you think it takes bravery to try new things, knowing that you will likely not be good at them right away?